

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A manufacturing method of a positive active material for alkaline storage battery including nickel hydroxide as a main component and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, said method comprising:

an oxidizing step of chemically oxidizing said nickel hydroxide to produce a higher order nickel hydroxide, an average valence of which is greater than 2.3, including nickel hydroxide,  $\beta$ -NiOOH and  $\delta$ -NiOOH; and

a reducing step of reducing the higher order nickel hydroxide obtained by said oxidizing step, wherein at least one of hydrogen peroxide, hydrazine and hydrogen iodide is used as a reducing agent, to produce a higher order nickel including nickel hydroxide and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, an average valence thereof being not greater than 2.3.

2. (Currently Amended) A manufacturing method of a positive active material for alkaline storage battery including nickel hydroxide as a main component and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, said method comprising:

a coating step of coating the surface of said nickel hydroxide with a cobalt compound;

an oxidizing step of chemically oxidizing said nickel hydroxide obtained by said coating step to produce a higher order nickel hydroxide, an average valence of which is greater than 2.3, including nickel hydroxide,  $\beta$ -NiOOH and  $\delta$ -NiOOH; and

a reducing step of reducing the higher order nickel hydroxide obtained by said oxidizing step, wherein at least one of hydrogen peroxide, hydrazine and hydrogen iodide is used as a

reducing agent, to produce a higher order nickel including nickel hydroxide and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, an average valence thereof being not greater than 2.3.

3. (Currently Amended) A manufacturing method of a positive active material for alkaline storage battery including nickel hydroxide as a main component and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, said method comprising:

a coating step of coating the surface of said nickel hydroxide with a cobalt compound;

a high-ordering step of subjecting said cobalt compound to alkaline heat treatment so that said cobalt compound is in a higher order;

an oxidizing step of chemically oxidizing said nickel hydroxide coated with said higher order cobalt compound to produce a higher order nickel hydroxide, an average valence of which is greater than 2.3, including nickel hydroxide,  $\beta$ -NiOOH and  $\gamma$ -NiOOH; and

a reducing step of reducing the higher order nickel hydroxide obtained by said oxidizing step, wherein at least one of hydrogen peroxide, hydrazine and hydrogen iodide is used as a reducing agent, to produce a higher order nickel including nickel hydroxide and  $\beta$ -NiOOH, an average valence thereof being not greater than 2.3.

4. (Previously Presented) The manufacturing method of a positive active material for alkaline storage battery according to Claim 1, wherein the degree of oxidation effected at said oxidizing step and the degree of reduction effected at said reducing step are adjusted so that the average valence of the higher order nickel hydroxide thus reduced is from 2.10 to 2.30.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Previously Presented) A nickel electrode comprising a porous electrode substrate filled with an active material slurry made of a positive active material prepared by the method defined in Claim 1 and a binder.

7. (Previously Presented) An alkaline storage battery comprising a nickel electrode defined in Claim 6, a negative electrode, a separator for separating said electrodes from each other, and an alkaline electrolytic solution.